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MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

JOINT APPLIED PROJECT

Measuring the Effectiveness of the Communications Electronics Life Cycle Management Command (CE-LCMC) Internship Pilot Training Program

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By: **Thomas Dickson**
Jan Oberdick
Jacqueline Hodge
March 2006

Advisors: **Alice Crawford**
Gail F. Thomas

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Over the next seven years, more than 50 percent of DoD's acquisition workforce will be eligible for retirement. To replace these highly skilled acquisition professionals, the Department of Defense (DoD) will need to efficiently and effectively train employees who are entering the contracting profession. In 2003, the Communications Electronics Life Cycle Management Command (CE-LCMC) established a pilot training program that was intended to accelerate the training and development of contracting interns. The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of this program from the perspectives of the 91 participating interns, the Contracting Officers who work with these interns, and the managers/supervisors in the Acquisition Center. Based on the analysis of five surveys, recommendations are offered for the improvement of the CE-LCMC's pilot intern training program.

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MEASURING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COMMUNICATIONS ELECTRONICS LIFE CYCLE MANAGEMENT COMMAND (CE-LCMC) INTERNSHIP PILOT TRAINING PROGRAM

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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from the

NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
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ABSTRACT

Over the next seven years, more than 50 percent of DoD's acquisition workforce will be eligible for retirement. To replace these highly skilled acquisition professionals, the Department of Defense (DoD) will need to efficiently and effectively train employees who are entering the contracting profession. In 2003, the Communications Electronics Life Cycle Management Command (CE-LCMC) established a pilot training program that was intended to accelerate the training and development of contracting interns. The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of this program from the perspectives of the 91 participating interns, the Contracting Officers who work with these interns, and the managers/supervisors in the Acquisition Center. Based on the analysis of five surveys, recommendations are offered for the improvement of the CE-LCMC's pilot intern training program.

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I. PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION AND BACKGROUND

The Department of Defense (DoD) has determined that a more strategic approach is required to train and develop the acquisition workforce. In 2003, the Communications Electronics Life Cycle Management Command (CE-LCMC) Acquisition Center Intern Institute was developed to address changes in the composition of the workforce, provide a more uniform training approach, and accelerate the training and development of contracting interns. At this point, 91 interns have been involved in this program, yet little research has been conducted to analyze the program's effectiveness. The purpose of this project is to examine this program from the perspectives of the participating interns, the contracting officers who work with these interns, and the managers/supervisors in the Acquisition Center.

A. PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

The need to establish an effective means for training entry-level DoD employees in the acquisition career field is critical for four important reasons: (1) the volume of government spending; (2) the new role of the acquisition professional; (3) the downsizing of the acquisition workforce; and (4) the large number of acquisition professionals who will be eligible for retirement.

1. Volume of Government Spending

DoD accounts for over two-thirds of the US Government's total spending on supplies and services. Each of the largest services − the Air Force, Army, and Navy − individually spend more than the largest civilian agency, the Department of Energy. Since dollars placed under contract by DoD exceeded 152 billion dollars in FY 2001, the need for a well-trained workforce is essential to ensure the taxpayers' dollars are well spent.[1]

[1] United States General Accounting Office, GAO 03-443, "Federal Procurement: Spending and Workforce Trends," April 2003, 5

2. New Role of Acquisition Professional

In recent years, many acquisition reforms have been initiated to change the way contract specialists conduct their business. To effectively apply these initiatives, the contract specialist must be more of a business manager in all aspects of contracting than was previously necessary. Before these changes were initiated, many contract specialists were only considered part of the contract-writing phase of the acquisition process, and the regulatory guidance was written in a way to tell the contract specialist each step he/she should take on each action. This did not allow a lot of deviation from the written guidance. Today, with the reforms in place, the contract specialist is a part of the complete acquisition process – from defining the requirement until the item or services are delivered. A specialist must be aware of life cycle cost analysis, work as part of a team to develop performance objectives and contract incentives, be aware of international issues, understand cost principles, conduct market analysis, only to mention a few of the new skills one must know. All these new skills and the regulatory guidance for contract specialists are written in a way that allows them to use good business judgment to award contracts. Today, acquisition career interns must be taught various core competencies to help them make those sound business judgments.

The changing role of the contracting specialist will also require increased leadership skills. As acquisition personnel retire, specialists with good leadership skills will be needed to fill leadership positions. Although leadership positions may be a few years away, leadership skills will be essential for those working as part of a team in the acquisition career field. Thus, developing the leadership skills early will meet DoD's strategic goal of having good leaders in the future.

3. Downsizing of the Acquisition Workforce

The effect of downsizing was the focus of an Office of the Assistant Inspector General for Auditing Report conducted in 2000. The study involved 14 Acquisition Organizations, including the Army Material Command, which is the headquarters for CE-LCMC Acquisition Center. Based on the information collected from the organizations, downsizing affected nine different mission functions in various degrees. Although less

than half of the organizations were affected in some areas – such as an increased backlog in closing out completed contracts, increased procurement action lead time (PALT), and reduced scrutiny in reviewing acquisition actions – more than half of the organizations were adversely affected in the following ways:

- Increased program costs resulting from contracting for technical support versus using in-house technical support (seven organizations).
- Insufficient staff to manage requirements (nine organizations).
- Personnel retention difficulty (six organizations).
- Some skill imbalances (nine organizations).

The significant downsizing in the acquisition workforce coincided with over 40 reform initiatives that were implemented from 1994 to 2000. Although these initiatives appeared to improve efficiency in contracting and helped offset the impact of acquisition workforce reductions, the report points out those concerns remain since staffing reductions have clearly outpaced productivity increases.[2]

4. Number of Acquisition Professionals Eligible for Retirement

Approximately 56 percent of acquisition professionals are eligible to retire over the next seven years. Based on fiscal year 2001 statistics, the percentage of DoD employees with less than 10 years of experience represent about 10 percent of the total acquisition workforce. Those employees with 10 years to over 20 years represent 32 percent of the workforce. Since approximately one-third of the acquisition workforce has between 10 and 20 years of experience, these employees have the knowledge and skills necessary to train interns.[3]

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[2] Office of the Inspector General Department of Defense Audit Report, "DOD Acquisition Workforce Reduction Trends and Impacts," Report Number D-2000-088, February 29, 2000, 16-21

[3] United States General Accounting Office, "Federal Procurement: Spending and Workforce Trends," GAO 03-443, April 2003, 40

B. EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF ACQUISITION INTERNS

DoD has mandated that acquisition professionals have a four-year degree, with at least 24 credit hours in the area of business, to enter the contracting career field. Although there has been some grandfathering of these requirements within DoD, those entering from outside DoD must fully comply with the degree requirements. Once in the acquisition workforce, DoD requires continuous learning. The continuous learning requirement states that all acquisition professionals must obtain 80 hours of continuous learning every two years. In the past, this has not been taken seriously at all acquisition centers. However, at the US Army Research and Development Engineering Command Acquisition Center Director's Conference held in November 2005, it was announced that supervisors' performances will be evaluated on how well their employees meet their training requirements. This step demonstrates DoD's increased emphasis on having a trained professional acquisition staff.

Interns, many of whom are hired directly out of college, have little or no understanding of the government's approach to contracting. To perform their jobs proficiently, they must

- learn unique, government-only software programs to prepare contract documents,
- learn numerous acronyms, which the government uses in day-to-day communication,
- become familiar with thousands of pages of regulatory guidance as set forth in the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR), Defense Acquisition Regulations Supplement (DFARs), and Army Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (AFARs), as well as local supplemental guidance set forth in standard operation procedures.

DoD has mandated that contracting acquisition personnel will be certified at each level of performance depending on their grade level. Each level has required courses that must be passed to achieve the next level. At the present time, each level is defined by General Schedule (GS) Grade, with Level I GS-07 to GS-09, Level II up to GS 12, and

Level III is GS 13 and above. If selected for a promotion from one level to another, employees have 18 months to obtain the certification at the new level or they may forfeit their promotion. This project focuses on Level I training and meeting the requirements at that level.

At the beginning of an intern's career, technical training is of the utmost importance. This training provides interns with the core competencies required to allow them to do their work. Department of Defense Manual (DoD 5000.52M) and the Defense Acquisition University (DAU) catalog provide the certification requirements for each level in the acquisition workforce. The core competencies can be found in Appendix F of the aforementioned manual.

The traditional technical training program for Contracting and Acquisition Management Career Field Interns is a structured three-year technical training program. During this period, the intern should be exposed to four types of training: formal instruction, on-the-job training, rotational cross training, and informal in-house training. Below is a discussion on each type of training.

Formal instruction consists of on-line and/or traditional classroom training. DoD mandates these courses for all acquisition personnel. Each acquisition career level requires formal courses to be completed to reach the next level.

On-the-job training places interns into teams and a Contracting Officer is assigned to the team to oversee their work. This type of training reinforces the formal training allowing the intern to gain specific contracting experience. Each intern is placed with an experienced Contracting Officer who acts as a resource of information for the intern. Typically, interns do not keep the same Contracting Officers throughout their training program. At each new rotational assignment, the intern is assigned a new Contracting Officer.

Rotational cross training introduces interns to various areas of the contracting organization. The management of the contracting organization determines the types and duration of rotational assignments. Rotational assignments may be in other agencies, for

example, the Small Business Utilization Office located within the Acquisition Center or Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA) for contract administration experience.

Informal in-house training goes hand-in-hand with the on-the-job training and is intended to complement both the on-the-job training and the formal training. Each Acquisition Center determines how to conduct informal in-house training. The management at CE-LCMC decided to introduce a more structured approach to informal in-house training, which is described in Chapter II. This project uses surveys to determine if CE-LCMC's Pilot Training is perceived as being effective in the training of interns by the interns, Contracting Officers, and managers/supervisors of CE-LCMC.

C. ACQUISITION CAREER PROGRESSION

The Army Civilian Training, Education and Development System (ACTEDS), is a Department of the Army program that provides civilian employees a roadmap for career development. The ACTEDS Plan provides a new intern with a systematic approach to manage his or her career through all three levels of acquisition career progression. A sample intern plan is provided in Appendix A that further defines the courses required at Level I and II. Of the three levels, Level I is a condition of employment. Level I training provides the intern with the technical competencies to do the work. The intern shall be Level I certified after the first year of training. Level II training is intended to allow the intern to work on more complex contractual actions and perform his or her duties on an independent basis. At the end of the intern's training program, the intern will be Level II certified. Level III training continues to enhance the employee's performance and to prepare the employee for future leadership positions. In summary, all three levels should focus on technical and leadership skills. Level II should focus on supervisory and managerial skills and Level III should focus on all the previously mentioned skills and executive competencies skills for future Senior Executive Service (SES) positions.

D. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this research is to determine the perceived effectiveness of the Pilot Intern Training Program at CE-LCMC. The study focuses on three groups, interns

participating in the pilot training, Contracting Officers who are the assigned interns after they have completed the training, and finally managers/supervisors in the organization. Each group was asked to complete a survey, which was constructed to capture each group's perception of how well the pilot training program performed.

The intern survey determined if interns feel the program provided them with the basic skills to work independently and if they feel it was time well spent. The Contracting Officer survey measured their perceptions of whether the program provided interns with the fundamental understanding of contracting skills and knowledge. The manager/supervisor survey measured their perceptions of whether there was any change in an intern's performance and if the mangers felt that it was a wise use of their resources.

The chapters to follow describe the pilot program in detail, describe the research method, and provide an analysis of each of the surveys. The final chapter provides a discussion of the project results and details recommendations made by each group, along with this team's final recommendations.

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II. CE-LCMC INTERN TRAINING AND COACHING PROGRAM

This chapter provides a discussion of how the informal training was conducted at CE-LCMC in the past and how the pilot program differs from the traditional training. The chapter provides the explanation for why the change from the traditional informal training to the pilot training program was necessary. This chapter will also provide a description of the pilot training program along with the curriculum for the program. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the coaching program that was part of the pilot training program at CE-LCMC.

A. DESCRIPTION OF TRADITIONAL INTERN IN-HOUSE TRAINING PROGRAM AT CE-LCMC

Traditional, informal intern training conducted at CE-LCMC consisted of assigning an intern to a Contracting Officer's team. The Contracting Officer would assign an experienced contract specialist to act as the intern's trainer who provided one-on-one training. The trainer worked with the intern to ensure he or she gained a basic understanding of skills, knowledge and abilities relating to contracting. After the initial six-month to a one-year assignment, the intern would be reassigned to another team. During this second rotation, the intern could be reassigned to other offices within the Acquisition Center, such as the Small Business Office. This was the method used at CE-LCMC for the intern's first two years of employment. This type of training satisfied CE-LCMC for over 20 years before changes became necessary.

B. REASONS FOR DEVELOPING NEW PILOT INTERN TRAINING PROGRAM

The DoD acquisition workforce was reduced by almost 50 percent from 1989 to 1999 and the workforce at CE-LCMC was similarly affected. Although there was a significant reduction in the number of contracting employees within CE-LCMC during this period, 43 interns were hired in November 2003 and an additional 48 interns were

hired in August 2004. With the reduction of the experienced workforce at CE-LCMC and the hiring of a large number of interns, CE-LCMC could no longer conduct one-on-one training.

Another consideration in changing the approach for training the interns was the increased workload placed on the organization. In fiscal year (FY) 2000, CE-LCMC awarded about $4.39 Billion in contracts. In FY 2005, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom, and the Global War on Terror, over $11 Billion in contracts were awarded. The number of contractual actions increased from 9,500 in FY 2000 to just over 16,000 in FY 2005. While at the same time, the number of employees decreased from 480 in FY 2000 to 390 in FY 2005.

Additionally, CE-LCMC concluded that the traditional one-on-one informal training provided to the interns was inconsistent. The one-on-one training the intern received was only as good as the trainer's ability to do the job or in some cases the trainer's willingness to train the intern. This resulted in inconsistencies in how interns were trained throughout the organization

As a result of the reduction in the workforce, the increased workload, and the inconsistent method of training, CE-LCMC recognized the need for a revised plan to train interns. CE-LCMC developed the pilot training program described below.

C. DESCRIPTION OF CE-LCMC'S PILOT TRAINING PROGRAM

CE-LCMC established a pilot training program, which was named the CE-LCMC Acquisition Center (CAC) Intern Institute. This new training program was intended to accelerate the education and training of the interns, so that they would be able to carry their own workload as quickly as possible, with the minimum drain on the Acquisition Center's staff.

The first group of interns was hired in November 2003. Throughout this paper, this group of 43 interns is referred to as the second-year interns. In August 2004, the organization hired 48 new interns. This group is referred to as the first-year interns.

Both groups of interns completed two months of in-formal classroom training led by four senior-level employees. There were aspects of the training that differed between the two groups, which are discussed below.

First-year interns (2004) were required to take part in a four-month coaching program conducted by three senior-level employees and were not assigned a trainer. The first-year interns completed their first on-line Defense Acquisition University (DAU) contracting class independently after they returned to the Acquisition Center from the CAC Intern Institute

Second-year interns (2003) were given the option to participate in the coaching program. Also, the second-year interns completed the first on-line DAU contracting class as part of the CAC Intern Institute and when they returned to the Acquisition Center they were assigned a trainer.

All interns completed a survey to assess the success of the new classroom and coaching programs. The results of these surveys will be discussed in Chapter IV.

D. PILOT TRAINING PROGRAM CURRICULUM

Every workplace has a unique and distinct culture; for example, on-line businesses are typically relaxed, creative environments, where one might find employees working in jeans and sneakers. An investment bank requires their employees to be clad in Brooks Brothers or Armani suits and employees thrive on competing with their colleagues. A first-year intern stated, "Not only does the CE-LCMC Acquisition Center at Fort Monmouth have its own culture, it has it own zip code." Management at CE-LCMC felt it was important to introduce the interns to the initial training as a group and to acquaint them with the culture of Defense Acquisition and the culture at CE-LCMC Acquisition Center, Fort Monmouth. The purpose of the training was to help the interns adapt to the culture and to quickly become productive members of the workforce.

The remainder of this chapter focuses on first-year interns. All 48 interns reported to the Acquisition Center on the same day and time. During the first week, interns met the Director and other management officials and were briefed on security and

various administrative procedures. Each intern was assigned a "sponsor," who was someone that had recently graduated from the intern program and could help familiarize the interns with CE-LCMC and Fort Monmouth.

After the first week of class, the interns divided into two groups with two instructors for each group. The remaining classroom training lasted for two months and included material that was grouped in a logical progression of topics. The curriculum covered the following topics:

General Overview of Acquisition World
Acquisition Phases
Alpha Contracting
Anti-Deficiency/Bona fide Need Rule
Best Value
Close Out Process
Commercial Contracting
Competition vs. Sole Source Contracting
Congressional Holds
Contract Administration
Contract Award
Contract Modifications
Contract Types
Disputes
Forecasting an Acquisition
Government Property
Fiscal Law
Labor Laws
Acquisition Planning
Defense Contract Audit Agency (DCAA)
Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA)
General Services Administration (GSA)
Justification and Approval (J&A)
Options
Performance Based Service Acquisitions
Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA)
Required Sources of Supplies
Simplified Acquisition Procedures (SAPs)
Security Briefing
Undefinitized Letter Contracts
Multiple Awards
Patents
Small Business and Socio-Economic programs
Sealed Bids
Service Contracts

Subcontracting
Terminations

Instructors used PowerPoint presentations, discussions, guest speakers, and hands-on activities such as mock negotiations. The students were encouraged to take notes and ask questions. Once the interns returned to the Acquisition Center and began their on-the-job training, they had their notes and PowerPoint slides to refer to at their desks.

To keep the training interesting and still acquaint the interns with Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR), Department of Defense FAR Supplement (DFARS), and Army Federal Acquisition Regulations Supplement (AFARS), the Instructors used various types of creative teaching techniques. For instance, an Instructor would pass around a hat that had slips of paper inside. Each intern would draw a slip of paper and be assigned to read a FAR or DFAR's clause. The intern was given a short time to write a summary of what he or she thought the clause meant and present the findings to the class.

Another activity was mock negotiations. The interns were divided into eight teams, four teams representing the Government, and four teams representing the Contractor. They were given a proposal to evaluate with the assistance of the requiring activity (the customer). The Instructors played the role of the requiring activity. The Government team was given mock audits from the Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA) and the Defense Contract Audit Agency (DCAA) to use for formulating their negotiation position and writing their Pre-Negotiation Objective Memorandum (POM). The requirements of the POM are set forth in the FAR and establish the Government's negotiation objective for the cost or price of an item or service. For the purpose of this exercise, the contractor teams also wrote a POM, and then Government and Contractor representatives were paired together and given time to negotiate. Each team prepared a Price Negotiation Memorandum (PNM), which documents the results of their negotiations. At the conclusion of the exercise, time was allotted for feedback and lessons learned.

In another exercise, the interns were assigned a Government contracting topic and asked to give a presentation. Additionally, the interns were trained on the Procurement Automated Data and Document System (PADDS), which is a computer system used to generate CE-LCMC contracts. The interns used the information gained from their mock negotiations to create a contract in PADDS.

E. COACHING PROGRAM

After the classroom training, CE-LCMC conducted a four-month coaching program for the first-years interns. The second-year interns were encouraged to participate in the coaching program but were not required to participate. Coaching was performed either in a group and on an individual basis. The purpose was to:

- Continue providing interns with consistent training.
- Encourage them to work independently.
- Reduce strain on the current workforce.
- Develop an environment of just-in-time learning.

Interns were assigned to one of three divisions in CE-LCMC. Each division was assigned a coach. The coaches were Branch Chiefs who are all senior-level employees.

The Deputy Director of CE-LCMC instructed the coaches to:

- Interact with the interns, Group Chiefs (their GS 14 counterparts) and Division Chiefs.
- Not usurp the Contracting Officer's authority.
- Monitor the progress and growth of the interns.
- Be knowledgeable of the workloads and work assignments of each of the interns.

Workloads are assigned either by the Division Chief or the Group Chief, with input from the Coaches. If the interns did not approach the Coaches, the Coaches would seek out the interns and let them know they were there to assist them. Coaches kept records to ensure they spent time with each intern. The Coaches used these records to

monitor progress of each intern. These records were provided to the Intern Coordinator to assess the individual's level of learning. Evaluation forms were completed to ensure consistency in intern ratings. Coaches also conducted meetings with the interns as a group. These meetings provided an opportunity for the interns to share their experiences with each other and for the Coaches to disseminate contracting information.

During the four-month coaching period, weekly meetings were held with the Deputy Director, Division Chiefs, and the Coaches. Discussions revolved around whether the coaching program was meeting its intended goals, if the program was effective, if the interns were participating in the program, and whether the Contracting Officers were supportive of the program. The purpose of this project was to determine the effectiveness of the classroom and coaching program, as perceived by the interns, the Contracting Officers, and the managers/supervisors. The research methodology is discussed in the next chapter and Chapter IV provides an analysis of the surveys.

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III. RESEARCH METHODS

This research identifies the perceptions of the three groups impacted by the CE-LCMC's Intern Pilot Training Program, the interns, the Contracting Officers and the managers/supervisors. Surveys were used to gather information from these groups. Below is an explanation of how each survey was developed and conducted. A detailed analysis of each survey will be provided in the next chapter.

A. INTERN SURVEYS

Three separate surveys, developed by the CAC instructors, were given to the interns. The survey questions were open ended to encourage the interns to describe their opinions and recommendations in detail. The analysis of the survey is based on a reading of the responses to assess the overall tone and identify common areas of agreement in the responses. For the purposes of this analysis one individual reviewed all responses. In this way the three surveys are all assessed in a consistent manner. This paper only contains opinions or recommendations that appeared in the surveys so that it represents the opinions of the interns not the reviewer.

Responses were categorized to assist in gauging the degree of agreement. Responses were ranked from "most favorable" to " least favorable." As part of the analysis, the narrative responses were rated "most favorable," "favorable," to "least favorable" based on the terminology used by the interns. Responses were rated most favorable if the narrative included words such as "definitely," "absolutely" or any other superlatives. A response was rated least favorable if the intern qualified their response with a "yes, but" or indicated that the program did not meet its objective. Favorable was used for all other responses.

The three surveys were reviewed in the order of the interns' experience, first-year upon completion of classroom training, then first-year after four months of coaching and on-the-job training, and finally the second-year interns after classroom training and one year of on-the-job training.

1. Survey One (Appendix B)

This first survey was developed by the CAC instructors and distributed at the completion of the classroom training in October 2004. The survey was intended to judge the interns' initial reactions to the CAC Intern Institute training. The survey was short, asking only five open-ended questions and soliciting recommendations for improvement.

Forty-eight, first-year interns completed the training, and 36 responded to the survey for a 75 percent response rate. Chapter IV breaks out the number of respondents to each question. This methodology was used for all three surveys. Based on the number of surveys completed and the consistency of the responses, the reviewer believes these results represent the opinions of the majority of the interns.

The responses are ranked from "most favorable" to "favorable" to "least favorable." Since this data is only one person's interpretation examples of "most favorable." "favorable" and "least favorable" responses are provided to support the ratings in Chapter IV.

2. Survey Two (Appendix C)

The second survey was developed by the CAC instructors and completed by the first-year interns after they had completed their classroom training and participated in the four-month coaching program. The survey was a follow up to confirm the findings in the first survey and evaluate the value of the coaching program. This survey had 13 open-ended questions.

Forty-eight, first-year interns completed the training, and 33 responded to the survey for a 68 percent response rate. Based on the number of surveys completed and the consistency of the responses, the reviewer believes that these results represent the opinions of the majority of the interns.

The responses are ranked from "most favorable" to "favorable" to "least favorable." Since this data is only one person's interpretation, examples of "most favorable," "favorable" and "least favorable" responses are provided to support the ratings in Chapter IV.

3. Survey Three (Appendix D)

Forty-three second-year interns (2003) attended the CAC Intern Institute training. This survey, which was developed by the CAC instructors, was conducted to obtain the interns' perceptions of whether or not the CAC Intern Institute helped in applying the classroom training to practical applications. The same type of survey was given to the second-year interns as was given to the first-year interns. The survey questions were open-ended to encourage the interns to describe their opinions and recommendations in detail. The survey was short, asking only four questions, however, question two had four parts.

Twenty of the second-year interns completed the survey for a 47 percent response rate. Based on the number of surveys completed, and the consistency of the responses, it is likely that these results represent the opinions of the majority of the interns.

The responses are ranked from "most favorable" to "favorable" to "least favorable." Since this data is only one person's interpretation examples of most favorable, favorable and least favorable responses are provided to support rating in Chapter V.

B. CONTRACTING OFFICER SURVEY (APPENDIX E)

The survey included a total of 15 questions: Nine Likert-scaled questions, three open-ended comment questions, one multiple choice question, and finally a single question asking for years of experience as Contracting Officer. The survey for the Contracting Officers was developed by the authors of this paper and contained 15 questions, to assess the Contracting Officers perceptions of the pilot program training and the traditional training conducted in the past. The Contracting Officer's survey was distributed, collected, and analyzed by using an Internet program, *Zoomerang*. The survey was sent out to all 39 Contracting Officers located in the three contracting divisions at CE-LCMC, Ft. Monmouth. Of the 39 surveys sent out, ten individuals stated they could not offer an opinion regarding the training and six did not respond. Based on the number of surveys completed, 59 percent, and the consistency of the responses

provided we believe that these results represent the opinions of the majority of the Contracting Officers. The analysis of this survey will be supplied in detail in Chapter IV.

C. MANAGERS/SUPERVISORS' SURVEY (APPENDIX F)

The managers/supervisors' survey was developed by the authors of this paper to gather perceptions about any differences in the performance of interns who attended the Intern Pilot Training program compared to those who had received the traditional training in the past. The managers/supervisors were also asked if they felt that the Intern Pilot Training Program was a wise use of their resources. The Internet program, *Zoomerang*, was used to develop, distribute, and analyze the results of the survey.

The survey contained a total of 12 questions. Nine of the questions were Likert-scaled and three were open-ended questions. The three open-ended questions were to gather information for improving the pilot training program to meet future challenges of the organization. Questions were developed to determine the perception of the success or failure of the pilot training program and if the training program needed any modifications for continued improvement to support the organization into the future.

The survey was sent to all 19 managers/supervisors working in the three contracting divisions at CE-LCMC, Ft. Monmouth. Fifteen responded to the survey, which equates to a 79 percent response rate. Based on the number of surveys completed, and the consistency of the responses, we believe that these results represent the opinions of the majority of the managers/supervisors. A detailed analysis of all five surveys is provided in Chapter IV.

IV. ANALYSIS OF SURVEYS

In this chapter a detailed analysis of all five surveys is provided. Three surveys were conducted with two different intern groups. A fourth survey was conducted with the Contracting Officers and a fifth survey was given to the managers/supervisors. The surveys were used to identify the perceptions of these three groups regarding the success or failure of the Intern Pilot Training Program conducted at CE-LCMC. All responses to the intern surveys were open-ended, no scale or rating was associated with their responses. The managers/supervisors' and Contracting Officers' surveys used scaled items to assess the training programs.

A. INTERN SURVEYS

It is important to note that the CAC instructors developed the three surveys. The intern surveys were not developed as part of this research project. As described in Chapter III a method was developed to rate the responses on the surveys. For the purposes of this analysis one individual reviewed all responses. In this way the three surveys are all assessed in a consistent manner. Using this method we are reasonably assured that the findings are consistent.

1. Survey One: First-year Interns After Classroom Training

This survey was conducted after the classroom training was completed for the first-year interns (2004) and was intended to judge the interns' initial reaction to the CAC Intern Institute. The survey was short, asking only five questions and requesting recommendations for improvement. The survey is included as Appendix B to this report.

The assessment of the individual responses is provided as support for the recommendations, to highlight additional recommendations, and to recognize situations where a substantial minority had a strong difference of opinion with the majority.

Question 1 – How did you feel about attending a training session of this type prior to actually reporting to your duty station?

Thirty-six interns responded to this question. Eleven of the interns (30%) responded most favorable, 21 interns (58%) responded favorable, and four interns (12%) responded least favorable. Overall, there was strong support among the interns for the classroom training. For example, one of the most favorable comments was, "It was a very useful experience. It helped raise confidence when starting the actual work process, because we all have a common knowledge of our responsibilities." Other interns who provided most favorable comments simply responded, "The training was great." Favorable comments included, "The training was good," or "The training was helpful." The negative comments indicated that the class was too long or that the material needed to be covered in more depth.

Question 2 – Do you think that you received a good basic understanding of our Acquisition process and procedures? If not, what would you have liked to learn?

Thirty-four interns responded to this question. Eight of the interns (23%) responded most favorable, 23 interns (68%) responded favorable, and three interns (9%) responded least favorable. A typical most favorable comment was, "I think we received a great overview of the acquisition process and procedures." Favorable comments included, "Yes, I think I received a good overview of the acquisition process." Overall, there was strong support among the interns for this training. The negative responses were requests for more hands-on training. There were no suggestions from any of the interns as to what they would have liked to learn that was not offered in the training.

Question 3 – Do you have any apprehension about going to your duty location at this point?

This question was not rated "most favorable, "favorable," or "least favorable" because of how the question was worded. The intern either did or did not have apprehension about going to their duty station. There were 36 responses to this question. Thirteen of the interns (36%) responded that they had no apprehension. This group of

interns felt that they had a sufficient understanding of the process, materials for reference, and confidence that they knew where to go to get an answer to any question.

The remaining 23 interns (64%) indicated they had some apprehension. Most of the interns commented that they had "a little" apprehension and almost all attributed it to normal tension associated with starting a new position.

Question 4 – Were you satisfied with the way the material was provided?

Thirty-four interns responded to this question. Seven of the interns (21%) responded most favorable, 26 interns (76%) responded favorable, and one intern (3%) responded least favorable. One of the typical most favorable comments was, "The material was presented wonderfully. We have great instructors that walked us though everything." Many of the favorable comments simply responded, "Yes" or "Yes, the material was helpful." One intern responded "PowerPoint OVERKILL!!!" This response was categorized as "least favorable." Overall there was strong support among the interns for the material presented.

Even among those interns, who provided favorable responses, shortcomings were identified. These shortcomings were centered on the overuse of PowerPoint presentations and the "dry" material in some of the briefings.

Question 5 – What changes, if any, would you recommend in the future? In what ways can you see the training sessions improved?

This question was not rated "most favorable," "favorable," or "least favorable" because of how the question was worded. Below are the recommendations made by the interns.

The most common recommendations were for more hands-on experience, more mock negotiations, and to spend more time with their sponsor. A common negative was that the Power Point presentations were too "dry."

Recommendations made by a single intern included:

- Define the role of a contract specialist.
- Increase the number of review sessions.

- Distribute briefs the day before the class, so that the material can be reviewed ahead of time.
- Increase the number of tests to one for each major briefing section (more but smaller tests).
- Modify the program to have three weeks of class training, followed by two weeks on-the-job, and then return to complete the class training.
- Let the interns develop a training manual for the next class.
- Eliminate the class presentations.
- Eliminate the trip to Atlantic City.
- Divide the classes into sectors (divisions), providing subject depth in that sector (division) and overviews of the other two.

2. Survey Two: First-year Interns After Classroom Training and Four Months of Coaching

The second survey was completed by the First-year interns after they had completed their classroom training, had four months of on-the-job training and working with their Coaches. The survey is found in this report as Appendix C.

The assessment of the individual responses is provided as support for the recommendations, to highlight additional recommendations, and to recognize situations where a minority had a strong difference of opinion with the majority.

Question 1 – Now that you have been a part of the Acquisition Center for four months and are actively working as a Contract Specialist, how do you think the training you received with the CAC Intern Institute helped prepare you for your current job assignment with the Acquisition Center? Please explain how the training did or did not help you.

Thirty-one interns responded to this question. Eight of the interns (26%) responded most favorable, 20 interns (64%) responded favorable and three interns (10%) responded least favorable. Overall, there was strong support among the interns for this training.

The interns agreed that the training did help prepare them for their assignments. Comments indicated that training provided a good overview of procedures and tools

necessary to perform the job. Several of the interns commented that the most important concept they learned was how to use the research tools to find answers. A least favorable comment was, "The training in learning the systems that we use was helpful, but as for the work I actually had to do, I was lost. I always felt lost in the overall process of the acquisition process. We had all of the parts, but I was never able to put them together in class."

Question 2 – Do you think that the CAC Intern Institute training should continue to be given prior to starting on-the-job training, do you think it would be better to be given the training after you have had the opportunity to work for a few months in the Acquisition Center, or do you think there was insufficient value added by this training to merit the time spent? Please explain your answer.

Overall the interns thought the time spent in the classroom was valuable. Fourteen interns (45%) favored continuing the classroom training prior to beginning on-the-job training. Four interns (13%) favored on-the-job training followed by classroom training. Nine interns (29%) stated classroom training should be merged with on-the-job training. Three interns (10%) suggested the classroom training should be reduced from two months to one month. One intern (3%) stated there was insufficient value added for the classroom training considering the time spent and recommended only on-the-job training.

Question 3 – Do you think that the training you received gave you a good basic understanding of our acquisition processes and procedures and that it is helping you in your current assignment? Please provide any positive and/or negative comments along with recommendations for improving our curriculum.

Thirty-one interns responded to this question. Seven of the interns (22%) responded most favorable to this question, 21 interns (68%) responded favorable, and three interns (10%) responded least favorable. Overall, there was strong support among the interns for this training.

The responses here were very similar to the responses in Survey 1, question two. Most stated that the class provided a good overview. In this survey a number of the

interns indicated that the training had given them the tools to find answers about their work and in several cases they noted that they still referenced their class material.

Question 4 – Considering your current experiences and looking back on the training, what could we do differently for future training? Were you satisfied with the way in which the material was provided (i.e., briefing charts, handouts, the subject matter expert briefings, classroom exercises, interactive training, etc.)?

This question was not rated "most favorable," "favorable," or "least favorable" because it was requesting how the training could be improved. There were 30 responses to this question. Twenty-one (70%) requested more hands-on training and more mock negotiations, but overall thought the training was good. Two "most favorable" comments were, "It was a great environment, with great instructors," and "Briefing charts and handouts were excellent." One negative comment was, "Do you enjoy looking at Power Point presentations for six hours a day." Other comments included:

- Shorten the classroom time.
- Teach more basics.
- Subject matter experts went into too much information.
- Follow-up with monthly meetings with trainer.
- Less PowerPoint presentations.
- Satisfied with the instruction.

Question 5 – Do you think there should be more interactive training? If so, please provide examples of the type of interactive training you would find beneficial and explain how it could be accomplished.

There were 28 responses to this question. Twenty-one (75%) of the interns responded that there should be more interactive exercises and six (22%) opposed more interactive exercises. The most common recommendation from ten of the interns (28%) was to have an exercise that covered all or parts of a contract. The second most common recommendation, sometimes referenced as part of the mock contract, was to increase the amount of Procurement Automated Data and Document System (PADDS) training. Seven (25%) of the interns specifically requested more of this training. Additional recommendations include:

- Spending more time side by side with the sponsor.
- More student presentations.
- Training on Weighted Guidelines.
- Training on various systems and documents.

Question 6 – Now that you've had some practical experiences, what part of the CAC Intern Institute training helped you the most and was the most beneficial to you? What should we ensure we continue?

There was no clear consensus on this question. Seven interns (21%) identified the mock negotiations as what helped them the most; six (18%) identified the class handouts. The remainder of the responses was spread across a variety of items:

- Systems training.
- Spending time in the Acquisition Center.
- Guest speakers.
- Contacts made in class.
- Training on the FAR.
- Student presentations.
- Trip to Atlantic City.

Question 7 – Are there any blocks of instruction that you think should be removed from the CAC Intern Institute training curriculum? If so, please list them and comment on whether you think they were of no value or whether they were given too early in your contracting career to be of any future value.

This question was not rated "most favorable," "favorable," or "least favorable" because of how the question was worded. The question is requesting feed back from the interns on the curriculum.

Fifteen interns (46%) did not want to remove any material from the training. Some interns suggested reducing the amount of time dedicated to researching the FAR and PADDs training. However, several interns identified these two components as the most important aspects of their training and several more requested additional PADDS training in prior questions.

Question 8 – Is there any specific training that should be added to the CAC Intern Institute curriculum?

This question was not rated "most favorable," "favorable," or "least favorable" due to of how the question was worded and because of the wide variety of answers.

Most of the recommendations about adding training were already covered in Question 5. There were three interns who repeated a suggestion from the first survey to provide a general overview of the CAC organization and the contracting process. Other suggestions were:

- More training on PADDS.
- Include more presentations from other organizations.
- Samples (memos, etc.) in the class handouts.

Question 9 – During the training, you had the opportunity to come to the Acquisition Center and shadow a senior intern for half of the workday and share/participate in some actual work experiences. Please provide your comments/feedback on this experience. Was it a benefit to help you ease the transition from the training class to the workforce? Did it help relieve any fears of the work place? Should future classes consider including more of this training opportunity and increase such visits?

Thirty-two interns responded to this question. Eight of the interns (25%) responded most favorable to this question, 20 interns (63%) responded favorable and four interns (12%) responded least favorable. Overall there was strong support for shadowing a senior intern. Most favorable comments included, "This day was very beneficial. Future classes should definitely be given this opportunity, and the visits should be done more often," and "Yes, I really, really enjoyed this opportunity." Some of the favorable comments were, "I think the visits were useful to get use to the work environment" and "I feel they should continue this training." A comment that represents least favorable was, "No, I did some work that day, but had no clue of what I was doing."

Question 10 – What improvements can we make for future training classes that would be of immediate help in starting work?

This question was not rated "most favorable," "favorable," or "least favorable" due to how the question was worded and because of the wide variety of answers.

Most interns referred back to their recommendations made in response to other questions. A few of the interns repeated recommendations for more hands-on training, more shadowing, and more PADDS training. A few individuals made additional suggestions:

- Knowing ahead of time the team where the intern is going to be assigned and getting some background on that team.
- Hearing different Contracting Officers explain the kind of work they are doing and what they expect of the incoming interns.
- Improved training facilities and equipment.

Question 11 – Please provide your comments on the Coaching Program. Has it helped to supplement your learning? Is it beneficial to you? If you haven't utilized the Coaches, please explain why.

Thirty-three interns responded to this question. Seventeen of the interns (52%) responded most favorable to this question, 10 interns (30%) responded favorable, and six interns (18%) responded least favorable. Overall there was strong support of the coaching program.

Most interns gave strong or very strong support to the coaching program. Examples of most favorable comments were, "The coaching program was amazing. My Contracting Officer has too much work to sit down with me and help when I have questions so it is great to have a coach available to answer questions" and "I think the coaching program is really beneficial. It's getting help and training when we need it and will apply it." Some favorable comments included, "I feel the coaching program was a good idea," and "I think the coaching program was helpful." A few interns indicated that the program should be more structured with regular meetings. This recommendation also appeared a few times in Question 12.

A least favorable comment came form three interns who stated the advice they received from their Coach contradicted their assigned Contracting Officer's guidance.

Question 12 – Please provide any additional comments and/or recommendations for improvement of the CAC Intern Institute training. Should we continue the CAC Intern Institute in the future?

Twenty-eight interns responded to this question. Eleven of the interns (39%) responded most favorable, 17 interns (61%) responded favorable. Overall there was very strong support among the interns to continue with the CAC Institute. There were no negative comments for this question. Examples of most favorable comments were, "Yes, you should definitely continue the CAC Intern Institute. It was a great way to get an overview," and "Very successful institution. The program must be continued." Favorable comments included, "Yes, continue the training" and "The Intern Institute should continue."

Question 13 – Please provide any additional comments and/or recommendations for improvement of the Coaching Program. Should we continue utilizing the Coaching Program in the future?

Thirty-one interns responded to this question. Eleven of the interns (35%) responded most favorable to this question, 17 interns (55%) responded favorable, and three interns (10%) responded least favorable. Overall there was strong support among the interns for the coaching program.

Most interns gave strong or very strong support to continuing the coaching program. Several interns noted that their utilization of the coaches decreased over time as they became more integrated into their team. As a result there were several recommendations to shorten the program. Recommendations were made to increase the structure in the program by having more regularly scheduled meetings and add junior coaches.

Question 14 - Please identify your current Sector (Division) and describe your current experience within that Sector. For example, are you receiving varied, well-rounded work experiences and is the environment in your Sector conducive to enhancing your learning experiences?

The three coaches were also the classroom instructors who developed the surveys, which were given to the interns. They determined this question to be invalid and directed the interns not to respond. The question was determined invalid because it was Sector specific and addressed on-the-job training. The on-the-job training was not part of the pilot program and not part of this study. As a result there are no responses to analyze.

3. Survey Three: Second-year Interns After Classroom and On-The-Job Training

This survey was conducted to assess the impact of differences in the two pilot training programs. The survey is included as Appendix D to this report.

The assessment of the individual responses is provided as support for the recommendations, highlight additional recommendations, and to recognize situations where a minority had a strong difference of opinion with the majority.

Question 1 – You have been integrated into CECOM Acquisition Center for one year and are an integral part of our workforce. You have had one year of practical experience, and we would like you to provide us with an updated assessment of your experiences and whether the CAC Intern Institute helped you put classroom training to a practical use.

There were only three responses to this inquiry, which is insufficient to draw any conclusions.

Question 2 – In particular, while attending the CAC Intern Institute you were provided time to take the required on-line CON 101 training class;

Question 2, Part a – How did you feel about taking CON 101 during the CAC Intern Institute training?

Eighteen interns responded to this question. Seven of the interns (39%) responded most favorable, 10 interns (56%) responded favorable, and one intern (5%) responded least favorable. Overall there was strong support among the interns for this training.

The majority of the interns endorsed having on-line training in conjunction with the classroom training. Seventeen of the responses were most favorable or favorable with only one negative response. The only negative response was, "I did not enjoy it. Not as effective as real classroom training." The reasons given for the most favorable/favorable responses were:

- Having the training in the CAC Intern Institute provided the time needed to work on the class.
- Six interns commented that this provided the opportunity to work with the other interns and trainers.
- Two interns noted that having the on-line course work in conjunction with the classroom training allowed them to fill in gaps in the class schedule.

Question 2, Part b – Did being in class at the same time help you better understand the requirements of CON 101 because of the classroom instruction provided?

Eighteen interns (90%) agreed that the classroom instruction helped them understand the requirements of CON 101. The positive responses are the same as noted in part 2a above. Two interns (10%) responded with the following least favorable comments, "Sometimes the classroom and CON 101 class coincided, however that could have been better planned" and "No, I do not feel that I understood more because I was in classroom instruction. I feel I learn better when I am able to apply what I learn, in other words on-the-job training."

Question 2, Part c – Was there a positive, negative or neutral impact on either the CAC Intern Institute Training or your participation/completion of CON 101.

Twenty interns responded to this question. Ten of the interns (50%) responded most favorable, 9 interns (45%) responded favorable and one intern (5%) responded least favorable. Overall there was strong support among the interns for this training.

Most responses did not differentiate between the on-line and classroom training. No new commentary or recommendations were provided.

Question 2, Part d – Based on your experience, now that more required classes are on-line, would it help to have more on-line classes coincide with the CAC Intern Institute training or at a minimum CON 101 or, doesn't it matter?

Twenty-eight interns responded to this question. Ten interns (36%) responded most favorable, 13 (46%) responded favorable and five (18%) responded, "Doesn't matter" which was rated least favorable. The ten most favorable respondents stated that more on-line training should be given in the CAC Intern Institute. "Yes" answers were rated favorable.

Question 3 – Please identify your current Sector (Division) and describe your current experience within that Sector. For example, are you receiving varied, well-rounded work experiences and is the environment in your Sector conducive to enhancing your learning experiences?

The three coaches, who were also the classroom instructors, developed the surveys that were given to the interns. They determined this question to be invalid and directed the interns not to respond. The question was determined to be invalid because it was Sector specific and addressed on-the-job training. The on-the-job training was not part of the pilot program and not part of this study. As a result there are no responses to analyze.

Question 4 – Although the Coaching Program was only implemented this past October, your comments/recommendations in this area are requested as well. Is it beneficial to you as a second-year intern?

Nineteen interns of the forty-three second-year interns responded to this question. Nine of the interns who responded to the question stated they did not participate in the coaching program. Of the 10 interns who did participate in the program, four interns (40%) responded most favorable with comments such as, "The coach was very helpful, a wealth of knowledge and very approachable." Two interns (20%) responded favorable with comments such as, "Seems like a great concept; however there are so many professionals within the acquisition center who are willing to help/advise on an informal basis (as needed), that the need for a full-time coach is questionable." Four interns (40%)

responded least favorable with comments such as, " I have had some bad feedback from certain teams about getting contracting expertise from other than my own team."

B. CONTRACTING OFFICER SURVEYS

The survey for the Contracting Officers contained 15 questions, from which the research team drew conclusions regarding the Contracting Officers' perceptions of the pilot training program, as well as individual training. Each of the Contracting Officer Survey questions is provided below, as well as the results from the question and a brief analysis. The single answer, multiple choice questions required one of the following responses: strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree, and not sure. A copy of the survey is provided as Appendix E.

Question 1 – As a Contracting Officer, I have noticed a measurable difference in the ability of interns who participated in the Pilot Program, over those who did not receive coaching and classroom experience.

Seven of the respondents (30%) disagreed with the statement, and 12 (52%) either agreed or strongly agreed. Four (18%) were not sure. Although there was no definitive conclusion to this question, a slim majority did agree, or strongly agree, that the pilot program did provide them with advantages over other interns who did not participate in the pilot program.

Question 2 – Interns benefit most from "traditional training," which relies on an individual (one-on-one) trainer.

Twenty-two Contracting Officers responded to this question. Six (27%) of the respondents agreed and eight (36%) strongly agreed that interns benefit most from a one-on-one trainer; however, seven (32%) disagreed with this statement and one (5%) was not sure. Based on the results of this question, a majority of Contracting Officers believe interns benefit most from traditional, one-on-one training.

Question 3 - The Pilot Training Program, which employed a coaching technique, provided the interns with a broader, more complete experience that will provide benefits over one-on-one training.

Twenty-one Contracting Officers responded to this question. Eleven (53%) either agreed or strongly agreed, nine (43%) disagreed, one (5%) was not sure. Based on the results of this question, a small majority of Contracting Officers agrees with this statement.

Question 4 - On-the-job training is more beneficial for an intern's career development than on-line training.

Sixteen (70%) of the respondents stated that they strongly agreed and seven (30%) agreed that on-the-job training is more beneficial than on-line training. One respondent strongly disagreed, and one was not sure. Based on the results of this question most Contracting Officers believe on-the-job training is more beneficial than on-line training.

Question 5 - In my opinion, interns received the same level of training if they participated in the Pilot Program or if they were trained on an individual basis.

Eighteen respondents (78%) disagreed with this statement, two (9%) agreed. and three (13%) were not sure. Most Contracting Officers disagreed that the pilot program and one-on-one training provide equal levels of training. Since the question was not framed properly, more specific answers about the comparison are not available. However, advantages of the pilot program are addressed in other questions.

Question 6 – Classroom training is superior to on-line training.

Twenty-three Contracting Officers responded to this question. Fifteen strongly agreed (65%), six (26%) agreed, one strongly disagreed, and one was not sure that classroom training is superior to on-line training**.** Based on these results, a majority of Contracting Officers believe that classroom training is superior to on-line training.

Question 7 - The Pilot Program initiated by the Acquisition Center assisted interns in developing critical thinking skills.

Twenty-seven Contracting Officers responded to this question. Fifteen (47%) agreed or strongly agreed, seven (31%) were not sure, and five (22%) disagreed with the statement.

Based on the results of this question, slightly less than a majority of Contracting Officers believe the pilot training program assisted interns in developing critical thinking skills.

Question 8 – The interns who participated in the Pilot Program had a clear advantage in working independently over interns in previous training methods that used one-on-one training.

Twenty-three Contracting Officers responded to this question**.** Eight (35%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement, one (4%) strongly disagreed, seven (30%) agreed, one (4%) strongly agreed, and six (27%) were not sure. Since the respondents' answers were almost equally divided among those who disagreed or agreed no conclusions could be drawn from this question.

Question 9 – I noticed fewer mistakes in reviewing the work completed by interns who had participated in the Pilot Program over interns who were trained in traditional one-on-one training.

Twenty-two Contracting Officers responded to this question. Twelve respondents (55%) disagreed with the statement, five (22%) were not sure, and five (22%) agreed with the statement. A majority of the Contracting Officers could not distinguish between the number of mistakes made by interns who went through the two training programs.

Question 10 – I believe the Pilot Program was a cost-effective method of training new employees and think it should be adopted by other Acquisition Centers

This question related to the "cost-effectiveness" of the training provided through the pilot program and this was simply intended to determine what the Contracting Officers' perceptions of the cost-effectiveness were; it was not the intent of the survey to provide cost data to the Contracting Officers

Twenty Contracting Officers responded to this question. Eleven (48%) of the respondents agreed and two (9%) strongly agreed with the statement. Five (22%) respondents disagreed with this statement. Five (22%) responded "not sure." A slight

majority of respondents do believe the program is a cost effective method of conducting training and should be adopted by other Acquisition Centers.

Question 11 – Please provide any suggestions you have to improve on-the-job training for interns.

Twelve Contracting Officers responded to this question. Four of the twelve respondents were of the opinion that more "hands-on" experience provided the best method of learning the various aspects of contracting. Two of the respondents identified concerns that interns could research a problem, offer a solution, and be prepared to support their position. Another Contracting Officer suggested that trainers go over samples of the interns' writing ability to ensure the message is being properly conveyed. The remaining responses were varied and some are listed below:

- Interns should attend classes at other locations to allow interaction with employees at other contracting activities and be exposed to different methods of how contracting is conducted.
- Reduce the pilot program to one-half day sessions.
- Combine the pilot program training with one-on-one training.
- Introduce training that requires more independent thinking.

Question 12 – What new or developing challenges do you think will be placed on interns as they progress through their career?

Fourteen Contracting Officers responded to this question. Two of the respondents identified Ft. Monmouth being placed on the Base Realignment and Consolidation (BRAC) list and three identified a "faster pace" through the increased speed of communications, changing techniques, and "doing more with less." The remaining responses were varied and some are listed below:

- Four stated that interns are being promoted too quickly.
- One suggested there might be a bias against interns because they are promoted too quickly.

- "Funding issues" were identified as an ongoing problem.
- Interns must be "brought up to speed quicker."

Question 13 – What types of skills and abilities will these challenges require?

Thirteen Contracting Officers responded to this question. Three (23%) responded that a more in-depth knowledge of laws and regulations would be required, two (15%) stated excellent problem solving skills would be needed, and two (15%) listed education, communication and computer skills. The remaining responses (46%) were varied and some are listed below:

- Motivation and a positive attitude.
- Promoted slower.
- Flexibility to change.
- One-on-one training.
- Ability to make sound business decisions.

Question 14 – In my opinion, the interns that progress through the Pilot Program had a better fundamental understanding of the basic contracting knowledge relating to the following: This was a multiple answer question that related the perceived benefit the pilot program provided to the interns in preparing and executing different contract types or conducting market research. The question was structured by listing contract types and skills, allowing the Contracting Officers to select all that may apply. Although this question may have led some Contracting Officers to an answer, one Contracting Officer did respond that the pilot program did not provide a more fundamental understanding of any basic contract types or contracting knowledge. However, 11 respondents identified, cost-type, traditional "C" type contracts, 10 identified Indefinite Delivery/Indefinite Quantity type contracts, and 10 identified Simplified Acquisitions.

Question 15 – I have been a Contracting Officer for _____ number of years. The last question related to how many years experience each of the respondents had as a Contracting Officer.

Nineteen responded to this question. These responses varied from less than one to 17. Eight of the respondents had one-to-four years experience, seven had five-to-nine, and four had more than 10 years experience.

C. MANAGER/SUPERVISOR SURVEYS

Surveys were provided to managers and supervisors to determine their perception of success or failure of the CE-LCMC Pilot Training program. Questions were asked not only to determine the managers' perception of the training program, but also to determine if the training program needed any modifications for continued improvement. A copy of the survey is included as Appendix F.

Question 1 – Interns attending the CE-LCMC Pilot Training Program are more prepared to begin working than prior interns who did not attend this type of training.

Fifteen responses were received. The results were that 12 (80%) agreed or strongly agreed. Three (20%) of the respondents answered neutral for this question, indicating that the majority of these managers believed that the pilot program type training was more effective for new interns than the more traditional training.

Question 2 – The Pilot Training Program at CE-LCMC was a wise use of Acquisition Center resources.

Fifteen responses were received. Twelve (80%) either agreed or strongly agreed, two (13%) gave neutral responses, and one (7%) disagreed. Based on the responses, a majority perceived the pilot training was a wise use of resources.

Question 3 – The type of training that an intern has received has made no difference in their performance on the job.

Fifteen responses were received. A total of 14 (93%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed with only one (7%) strongly agreeing. Based on these results, the managers at CE-LCMC do believe the type of training that an intern is exposed to directly relates to the interns' performance on the job.

Question 4 – CE-LCMC Pilot Training Program provided interns with the skills necessary to perform basic contracting.

Fifteen responses were received. Twelve (80%) respondents either agreed or strongly agreed, one (7%) disagreed, and two (13%) responded neutral. The majority perceived that the program did provide the interns with appropriate skills to perform basic contracting.

Question 5 – CE-LCMC Pilot Training provided the interns with better contracting skills than traditional one-on-one training.

Fifteen responses were received. Eight (53%) of the managers either agreed or strongly agreed that the pilot training program did provide the interns with better contracting skills than the traditional one-on-one training. Four (27%) responses were neutral and three (20%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that the pilot program provided the interns with better skills. Slightly more than one-half of the managers believed the pilot program did provide the interns with better skills than the traditional one-on-one training.

Question 6 – The CE-LCMC Pilot Training Program promoted teamwork in the organization better than the traditional one-on-one training.

Fifteen responses were received. This question was developed because of CE-LCMC's perception that formal classes and coaching develops teamwork. Nine (60%) of the responses stated they perceived that teamwork was promoted with the pilot program training, three (20%) were neutral, and an additional three (20%) disagreed with the question. Reviewing all of the responses it can be stated that most respondents felt that the pilot training did promote teamwork better than the traditional one-on-one training.

Question 7 – The interns who participated in the CE-LCMC Pilot Training Program had a clear advantage in working independently over previous interns who received traditional one-on-one training.

Fifteen responses were received. Nine (60%) of the responses agreed or strongly agreed that the pilot training program provides the interns with the greater ability to work independently than the traditional training program, two (13%) responded with a neutral rating, and four (27%) disagreed with this statement. Most of the managers perceived the pilot training program did provide the interns with more skills to allow them to work independently than the traditional program.

Question 8 – I feel that the interns who completed the Pilot Training Program at CE-LCMC were better prepared to begin their acquisition careers and work on more complicated contractual actions sooner.

Fifteen responses were received. Eleven (73%) of the managers either agreed or strongly agreed that the interns were better prepared to begin their careers and work on complicated actions sooner, one (7%) was neutral, and three (20%) disagreed. The majority of managers perceived that the program provided the necessary skills to enable the intern to begin their acquisition career and to work on more complicated actions sooner.

Question 9 – The Pilot Training Program at CE-LCMC meets the strategic goals of the organization.

Fifteen responses were received. Thirteen (87%) agreed or strongly agreed that the program did meet the strategic goals of the organization, one response was neutral, and one respondent disagreed. A majority of the managers perceived the program did meet the organization's strategic goals.

Question 10 – Are there any improvements they would like to see in the training program?

Nine responses were received. Three of the comments related to the idea of bringing actual work into the classroom and working on the actions as part of a team,

such as a Small Business Innovative Research (SBIR) action. One manager recommended more practical exercises be established for the curriculum. One manager had a suggestion to develop a checklist that would be completed at the end of each class for each intern. The checklist would describe the training that each intern was exposed to and then be provided to the intern's supervisor. One comment suggested improving the facilities for the training. One comment was to adopt the pilot program as an organization standard and plan for the training accordingly, which could have meant that the manager/supervisor feels that CE-LCMC should established a separate office for intern training. Another comment was to make mentors a permanent position and take away all other duties. A last comment was to continue more of the same, which could be considered to continue with the pilot training program.

Question 11 – What challenges do you feel lie ahead for the acquisition professional in the future?

Eleven comments were received. Most of the comments relate to the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC), the continued departure of personnel, and the loss of technical expertise. At the present time, 30 percent of the CE-LCMC personnel are interns and the expertise and corporate knowledge continues to fade as people leave or retire. Two comments relate to the pilot training program as being a program that can train interns quicker to replace the departing staff. Concerns include keeping morale up and keeping the organization focused on the mission. The managers are concerned about more complex work coming to the organization and about being requested to complete these actions in a shorter period of time without experienced personnel. Managers are concerned that the personnel are not experienced enough to understand the total acquisition cycle and, by doing things quicker, may invite errors or even the loss of program funds.

Question 12 – What skills or abilities should the intern training program focus on to meet these challenges?

Ten comments were received. The following are actual comments received from the managers. Each one is unique and is shown separately:

- Positive mental attitude with customer focus.
- Refresher training needs to be available on an as needed basis. Although someone may have been given theoretical instruction in an area, if s/he hasn't had to deal with the subject area the training will no longer be helpful. Also, implementing guidance and training on new regulations needs to be provided on a timely basis.
- Training to pass on experience and help bring interns up to speed quicker. Question 5 above asked, "If classroom training is better than the traditional one-on-one training?" If you have superior one-on-one hands on training available, that is the best, but we do not have the luxury as we do not have the correct number of qualified people and time to do one-on-one, nor do we have the time with the increased workload that we have.
- Make sure the theoretical training is related to specific practical training, so they can see the point.
- Basic contract fundamentals, communications skills, initial leadership training. These folks will probably be moved into leadership positions much sooner than in the past.
- Continue to touch on as much of the basics as possible in their training. If they are grounded in the basics, that foundation will serve them well as they become hit with the more complex issues we see on a daily basis.
- Whether it be a preferred part of the job or not, the attention to detail and research aspects are important in addition to having the common sense to make good business decisions.
- Accounting, financial management, fiscal application, program management, pricing analysis, financial trend appreciation, solution recommendation, business drivers acumen, and the like.
- Continue to stress a mix of job assignments to make the intern gain an appreciation on the big picture faster.

- Obtain as much technical knowledge in their primary field, e.g., CP-14, as possible, keep current with their primary field and, upon achieving Level III, and train in other specialties. The truly well-rounded acquisition professional is needed to meet the challenges.

The following chapter includes the research team's recommendations and conclusions based on the results and analysis of the surveys.

V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

A. SUMMARY

The purpose of this research was to determine the perceived effectiveness of the Pilot Intern Training Program at CE-LCMC. The study focused on three groups, interns participating in the pilot training, Contracting Officers who were assigned interns after they completed the training, and finally managers/supervisors in the organization. Each group was asked to complete a survey(s), which was constructed to capture the group's perceptions of the pilot training program. This assessment of the program's success was based strictly on the responses and recommendations contained in the surveys. Within this framework the assessment of the pilot program had the following objectives:

- Determine if the intern groups valued the CAC Intern Institute.
- Determine if the intern groups valued the coaching program.
- Determine if the Contracting Officers and managers/supervisors supported the CAC Intern Institute.
- Determine if the Contracting Officers and managers/supervisors preferred either the pilot program or traditional one-on-one approach to on-the-job training support.
- Solicit the Contracting Officers and managers/supervisors for additional comments relating to training and workforce development.
- Efficient and effective use of CE-LCMC's resources.

Each of the objectives is discussed in the paragraphs that follow, beginning with the interns' responses.

In total, the interns' responses offered a strong endorsement of the new program. Many of the interns provided thoughtful, enthusiastic comments, and recommendations. Several interns offered their time to assist in further analysis, development, and implementation of their recommendations.

Most of the interns agreed that the training they had received in the CAC Intern Institute had accomplished its objective to provide a good basic understanding of the

acquisition process and procedures. However, support for the program was tempered by numerous suggestions for improvement as discussed in Chapter IV.

The coaching program was very popular with the first-year interns, with half of this group using superlatives such as, "very beneficial," "absolutely beneficial," and "great." The second-year interns were split on this topic. However, it was interesting to note, those that had used the coaches had very positive opinions of the program.

Overall, the analysis of the interns' surveys supported the continuation of the pilot training program. The surveys provided valuable recommendations for improvement in the program. The following paragraphs discuss the Contracting Officers' and the managers' overall perceptions.

Based on the information collected through the surveys, Contracting Officers and managers affected by the pilot program were generally supportive of the program. Each of the Contracting Officers or managers who responded to the survey were direct participants in the program, assumed additional duties while others devoted themselves to the program, worked with, or supervised interns who completed the program. The data suggested that while the respondents did think the pilot program was a success, there were many recommendations to improve the program.

Since there appeared to be some disagreement between the respondents regarding which training may provide the most benefit to an intern, the suggestion by one of the Contracting Officers to use a blend of coaching and one-on-one training may offer the best method of training new employees. Also, some of the Contracting Officers noted, "There is no substitute for experience," "experience may be the best teacher," and/or suggested the interns be assigned contract assignments as quickly as possible.

One of the more interesting findings was that the managers were generally more supportive of the pilot program than the Contracting Officers. Managers were more pleased with the results and were of the opinion that the pilot program was an improvement over other types of training. One of the managers suggested the group actually work through a Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) contract as a

method of combining the pilot program with "real world" experience. This concept is similar to ideas expressed by the some of Contracting Officers, although more defined. See Chapter IV for specific comments.

A finding taken from the Contracting Officers' survey is an almost unanimous consensus that classroom training or on-the-job training is superior to on-line training. Considering the investment DoD has made in on-line training, and what appears to be an increased reliance on this method of training, the impact of on-line training is unknown. One possible outcome is that organizations may be forced to improve their methods of informal training, if in fact, classroom training and on-the-job training is superior to on-line training for this particular application. Based on the interns' responses, the interns did appear to gain more benefit from on-line training when a Contracting Officer was available to answer questions to facilitate the process.

B. CONCLUSION

An overwhelming number of interns supported the pilot training program. They volunteered to revise the program to include some of their recommendations. Interns strongly supported the continuation of the program at CE-LCMC for future interns. The negative comments from the interns could best be summarized as follows:

- Reduce the time spent on PowerPoint presentations.
- Allow time to learn the PADDS software.
- Focus more on actual contractual problems and issues instead of theory.

Contracting Officers were not as supportive of the program as the managers/supervisors. A minority of the Contracting Officers even questioned the benefits of the pilot program. Forty-seven percent of the Contracting Officers were of the opinion that the pilot program was beneficial in assisting interns in developing critical thinking skills, which among some members of the acquisition workforce is a cornerstone in employee development.

A majority of the managers perceived that there was a difference in the ability of the pilot program interns to work on more complicated contracts sooner, than interns who had not received classroom and coaching experience. Managers perceived this program as a wise use of resources and a way to achieve DoD's strategic goal of training acquisition professionals. The interns who have undergone this pilot training are perceived by a majority of managers as being better skilled to perform their duties quicker and more efficiently.

In summary, CE-LCMC has developed a training program for interns that offsets the reduction of experienced personnel available to conduct one-on-one training. All three groups perceived the CE-LCMC Pilot Intern Training Program a success, but should be modified based on the recommendations. A majority of the Contracting Officers and managers perceived the pilot program to be a cost-effective method for training a large number of interns. Although the study focused on a situation where a large number of interns were hired at the same time, there are specific elements of the pilot training program that could be applied to Acquisition Centers with fewer interns. These elements include one or more of the following: incorporating coaching, conducting mini-training sessions, and having experienced personnel available to assist interns taking on-line courses.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

The pilot program should be modified to include a practical exercise by providing actual acquisitions to the classroom and having the group work through the process of reviewing the supporting documentation, preparing a solicitation, and working through award. This "real-world" application could be a Simplified Acquisition or a SBIR contract.

The team supports the recommendation to reduce the amount of time spent daily in the classroom to allow more on-the-job training. By applying principles learned in the classroom to on-the-job training concurrently, a more consistent learning environment will be provided and interns' development will be accelerated.

The coaching approach may only be appropriate for larger contracting activities that hire several interns at the same time. However, for other organizations, this approach may be applied in "mini-sessions" with various Contracting Officers, who are experienced in particular areas of acquisition.

D. AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The team's first recommendation for further study is to determine why there appears to be a disagreement between the Contracting Officers and the managers regarding the effectiveness of the pilot program. There are several possible reasons for this including, how the questions were framed within the individual surveys, how "success" is defined, where an individual is located within the chain-of-command, and personal bias. Since the surveys were only intended to measure "perceptions" this may be a difficult conclusion to reach, although with personal interviews and group discussions with the respondents more relevant information would be obtained.

Another recommendation is to form an Integrated Process Action Team to study the recommendations made by the interns, Contracting Officers, and the managers/supervisors to determine which recommendations could be implemented and at what time specific recommendations would provide the most benefit.

A final area for further research is to determine how an organization should support or provide the additional training necessary for an intern's development in conjunction with the on-line training provided by DAU. This is another factor that will complicate an organization's approach to employee training, regardless of the method or methods the organization uses to conduct its informal training.

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APPENDIX A

Contract Specialist Trainee Training and Development Program

References:
- Contracting and Acquisition Management Development Program, Intern Coordinator's Standing Operating Procedures, from the US Army Acquisition Support Center (ASC).
- CP-14 Career Intern Handbook, ASC.
- Defense Acquisition University (DAU) Catalog, on-line version.
- Information provided during ASC Intern Coordinators' Conference, June 2004.

First Year of Program GS-7

Formal Training
CON 100 Shaping Smart Business Arrangements; resident, length of class is 5 days
CON 110 Mission Support Planning, on-line course (1) (2)
CON 111 Mission Strategy Execution, on-line course (1) (2)
CON 112 Mission Performance Assessment, on-line course (1) (2)
CON 120 Contracting for Mission Support, resident, length of class is 10 days (3)
ACQ 101 Fundamentals of Systems Acquisition Management, on-line course (4)

Notes:
(1) Online classes are non-resident, self-paced courses on the Internet. Students must pass final exam within 60 calendar days of registration.
(2) There is no prerequisite for these classes. CON 100 is desired before taking these classes, however, if it is more practical from a scheduling standpoint, students may take these classes before completing CON 100.
(3) Prior to taking CON 120, students must complete CON 100 and CON 112.
(4) May be used as the "elective" requirement for Level I certification. This is an online course. Students must complete the course prior to the Enrollment Expire Date provided in the "Enrollment Notification – Course Welcome" message.

Total formal training: 15 days, plus Internet courses.

Rotational Assignments/Instruction within the First Two Years:

SBIRs/STTRs
BAAs
Contract Administration
Contract Closeout Procedures
Task Orders
BPAs
SADBU

Commercial Contracting
GSA
Solicitation Procedures (competitive simplified acquisition)
Government Credit Card Program

Evaluation

Evaluation is done after 6 months and after one year. The Trainee's Supervisor(s) is the "Rater." The Senior Rater is the Division Chief with whom the Trainee will be permanently placed. The evaluations are processed the same way as an employee's TAPES. The RDECOM Acquisition Center Trainee Coordinator will receive a copy of completed evaluation within 30 days of the 6-month and year anniversary dates.

Trainee must complete coursework and rotational assignments/instruction prior to qualifying for Level I Certification.

Second Year of Program GS-9

Formal Training
CON 202 Intermediate Contracting; resident, length of class is 10 days
CON 204 Intermediate Contract Pricing; resident, length of class is 10 days
CON 210 Government Contract Law; resident, length of class is 5 days with online Pre-course material
ACQ 201A Intermediate Systems Acquisition Management Part A (1) (2)
ACQ 201B Intermediate Systems Acquisition Part B; resident, length of class is 5 days (2)
AODC Action Officer Development Course, ST7000 (3)
ILDC Intern Leadership Development Course, length of class is 5 days, usually offered on-site

Notes:
(1) Online class, a non-resident, self-paced course on the Internet. Students must complete the course prior to the Enrollment Expire Date provided in the "Enrollment Notification – Course Welcome" message.
(2) May be used as one of the two "electives" requirements for Level II.
(3) Online class. May be accessed through http://cpol.army.mil/library/train/courses/ Enrollment for this course is required via https://www.aimsrdl.atsc.army.mil/secured/accp_top.htm

Total formal training: 35 class days plus Internet course material, or 7+ weeks.

Rotational Assignments/Instruction within Years 2 and 3:

Competitive solicitation and award
Task Orders
Other contracts, determined by Contracting Division

Source Selection / Performance Risk Assessment Group (If possible, work on a team doing a large value competitive formal Source Selection)
Observe, assist, and/or act as a Cost/Pricing Analyst
Participate in a Performance Risk Assessment Group
Process Engineering / Operational Analysis
Systems/databases, closeout reporting, operational analyses/queries,
Contract Action Reports (use of data), Cycle Time / PALT.
Acquisition Support / Compliance
Review of Sole Source Justification & Approvals (working with Requiring Activity and Contract Specialist) Policy Acquisition Letters, Policy Alerts,
Compliance Reviews Congressional Awards, Staff Meetings.

Evaluation

Evaluation is done after one year. The Trainee's Supervisor(s) is the "Rater." The Senior Rater is the Division Chief with whom the Trainee will be permanently placed. The evaluations are processed the same way as an employee's TAPES. The RDECOM Acquisition Center Trainee Coordinator will receive a copy of completed evaluation within 30 days year anniversary dates.

Trainee must complete coursework and rotational assignments/instruction prior to qualifying for Level II Certification.

Third Year of Program GS-11

Formal Training
BCF 205 Contractor Business Strategies; resident, length of class is 5 days (1) (2)
GRT 201 Grants and Agreements Management; resident, length of class is 3.5 days (1)
PQM 212 Market Research for Engineering and Technical Personnel; resident, length of class is 2 days (1)
ST 5001 Managing and Leading (1) (3)

Notes:
(1) May be used as one of the two electives required for Level III. These classes are suggested by the ASC. They are not currently part on the DAU certification requirements for Level III; however they may be included in the future.
(2) Prerequisite is ACQ 201B.
(3) Online class. May be accessed through http://cpol.army.mil/library/train/courses/
Enrollment for this course is required via
https://www.aimsrdl.atsc.army.mil/secured/accp_top.htm
Total formal training: 10.5 class days.

Rotational Assignments/Instruction May Include These Topics:

- Participate in at least one Procurement Management Review or equivalent internal assessment.
- Requiring Activity Rotation –
- Objectives include:
- Acquire appreciation of needs of requiring activity;
- Understand activity's budget and allocation of funds;
- Participate in creation of SOWs, J&As, contract changes; and
- Understand the role of logistics in acquisition.
- Source Selection / Performance Risk Assessment Group (See Year 2)
- Short-term assignment with a Contracting Division who has authority to award grants after taking GRT 201. May be done beginning with 2-weeks on-site, and then continuing the rotational assignment remotely from the Trainee's home office.

For Year 3, these assignments are being considered by the ASC:

- DCMA
- Greening Opportunity: 2-day program conducted at the National Training Center in Fort Irwin, CA; designed to introduce the participant to Army field operations.

Evaluation

Evaluation is done after one year. The Trainee's Supervisor(s) is the "Rater." The Senior Rater is the Division Chief with whom the Trainee will be permanently placed. The evaluations are processed the same way as an employee's TAPES. The Trainee Coordinator will receive a copy of completed evaluation within 30 days year anniversary dates.

Trainee completes year; Trainee may take CON 353 Advanced Business Solutions for Mission Support after completing one year of contracting experience after Level II certification. Trainee can go on to achieve Level III Certification after completing four years of contracting experience. DAU suggests taking two weeks of management and leadership training for Level III Certification.

GS-1102 Competencies

Competencies acquired during training relate to acquisition planning, contract formation and contract administration phases of the acquisition process. Competencies are taught through formal training and performing work assignments. Work assignments should provide the opportunity to demonstrate as many competencies as permitted. By completion of formal training as required for Level II certification, the trainee should have been exposed to competencies 1 through 85.

Trainee's Name: _____
Rater's Name: _____
Date: _____

		Date Completed	
Acquisition Phase	**Competency**	**Formal Training**	**Work Assignments**
Acquisition Planning	0 Contracting Orientation		
	Determination of Need		
	1. Forecasting Requirements		
	2. Acquisition Planning		
	3. Purchase Requests		
	4. Funding		
	5. Market Research		
	Analysis of Requirements		
	6. Requirements Documents		
	7. Use of Government Property & Supply Sources		
	8. Services		
	Extent of Competition		
	9. Sources		
	10. Competition Requirements		
	11. Set-Asides		
	12. 8(a) Procurements		
	Source Selection Planning		
	13. Lease Vs. Purchase		
	14. Price Related Factors		
	15. Non-Price Factors		
	16. Method of Procurement		

GS-1102 Competencies (Continued)

		Date Completed	
Acquisition Phase	**Competency**	**Formal Training**	**Work Assignments**
Acquisition Planning (cont.)	**Solicitation Terms & Conditions**		
	17. Contract Types – Pricing Arrangements		
	18. Recurring Requirements		
	19. Unpriced Contracts		
	20. Contract Financing		
	21. Need for Bonds		
	22. Method of Payment		
	23. Procurement Planning		
Contract Formation	**Solicitation of Offers**		
	24. Publicizing Proposed Procurements		
	25. Conduct Oral Solicitations		
	26. Solicitation Preparation		
	27. Preaward Inquiries		
	28. Prebid/Prequote/Preproposal Conferences		
	29. Amending/Canceling Solicitations		
	Bid Evaluation		
	30. Processing Bids		
	31. Bid Acceptance Periods		
	32. Late Offers		
	33. Price Analysis – Sealed Bidding		
	34. Responsiveness		
	Proposal Evaluation		
	35. Processing Proposals		
	36. Applying Non-Price Factors		
	37. Price Analysis -- Negotiations		
	38. Pricing Information from Offerors		
	39. Audits		
	40. Cost Analysis		
	41. Evaluating Other Offered Terms & Conditions		
	42. Award without Discussions		
	43. Communications/Fact Finding		
	44. Extent of Discussions (Competitive Range		

GS-1102 Competencies (Continued)

		Date Completed	
Acquisition Phase	Competency	**Formal Training**	**Work Assignment**
Contract Formation (cont)	45. Negotiation Strategy		
	46. Conducting Discussions/Negotiations		
	47. Debriefing		
	48. Responsibility		
	49. Subcontracting Requirements		
	50. Prepare Awards		
	51. Issue Awards & Notices		
	52. Mistakes In Offers		
	53. Protests		
Contract Administration	54. Contract Administration Planning		
	55. Post-Award Orientation		
	Initiation of Work & Modification		
	56. Consent to Subcontract		
	57. Subcontracting Requirements		
	58. Contract Modifications		
	59. Options		
	60. Task & Delivery Order Contracting		
	Quality Assurance		
	61. Monitoring, Inspection, and Acceptance		
	62. Delays		
	63. Stop Work		
	64. Commercial /Simplified Acquisition Remedies		
	65. Noncommercial Remedies		
	66. Documenting Past Performance		
	Payment & Accounting		
	67. Invoices		
	68. Assignment of Claims		
	69. Administering Securities		
	70. Administering Financing Terms		
	71. Unallowable Costs		
	72. Payment of Indirect Costs		

GS-1102 Competencies (Continued)

Acquisition Phase	Competency	Date Completed	
		Formal Training	Work Assignment
Contract Administration (cont)	73. Limitation of Costs/Funds		
	74. Price and Fee Adjustments		
	75. Collecting Contractor Debts		
	76. Accounting & Estimating Systems		
	77. Cost Accounting Standards		
	78. Defective Pricing		
	Special Terms		
	79. Property Administration		
	80. Intellectual Property		
	81. Administering Socio-Economic & Other Misc. Terms		
	Contract Closeout or Termination		
	82. Claims		
	83. Terminations		
	84. Closeout		
	85. Fraud & Exclusions		

Contracting Trainee Program Progress Record

Trainee's Name: _____
Rater's Name: _____
Date: _____

Professional Business Competency		Above	On Track	Below
1. Oral Communication	Ability to express information to groups effectively makes clear and convincing presentations, listens to others, attend to nonverbal cures.			
2. Decision-Making	Ability to make sound, well informed and objective decisions; commits to action.			
3. Interpersonal Skills	Shows understanding, courtesy, tact, empathy.			
4. Problem Solving	Ability to identify problems, determine accuracy and relevance of information; uses sound judgment to generate and evaluate alternatives and make recommendations.			
5. Teamwork	Encourages and facilitates cooperation, pride, trust, fosters commitment; works with others to achieve goals.			
6. Reasoning	Ability to identify rules, principles or relationships that explain facts, data or other information; analyzes information and makes correct inferences or accurate conclusions.			
7. Customer Service	Ability to work with customers to assess needs, provide assistance, resolve problems, satisfy expectations; knows products and services.			
8. Reading	Ability to understand and interpret written material including technical material, rules, regulations, instruction, reports; apply what is learned from written material.			
9. Attention to Detail	Is thorough when performing work and conscientious about attending to detail.			
10. Influencing / Negotiating	Ability to persuade others to accept recommendations; work with others towards an agreement; negotiate to find mutually acceptable solutions.			
11. Integrity/Honesty	Contributes to maintaining the integrity of the organization; displays high standards of ethical conduct and understands the impact of violating these standards on an organization, self, and others; is trustworthy.			
12. Planning and Evaluating	Ability to organize work, set priorities, determine resource requirements, determine goals and strategies; coordinate with other organizations, monitor progress, evaluate outcomes.			
13. Flexibility	Is open to change and new information; adapts behavior to work methods in response to new information, changing conditions or unexpected obstacle; effectively deal with ambiguity.			
14. Self-Management / Initiative	Ability to set well-defined and realistic personal goals, display a high level of initiative, effort and commitment towards completing assignments in a timely manner; work with minimal supervision; is motivated to achieve; demonstrates responsible behavior.			
15. Stress Tolerance	Ability to deal calmly and effectively with high stress situations (i.e. tight deadlines, hostile individuals, emergency situations, and dangerous situations).			

Professional Business Competency		Above	On Track	Below
16. Writing	Ability to recognize or use correct English grammar, punctuation, and spelling; communicate information in a succinct and organized manner; produce written information that is appropriate for the intended audience.			
17. Creative Thinking	Ability to use imagination to develop new insights into situations and apply innovative solutions to problems; design new methods where established methods and procedures are not applicable or are unavailable.			
18. Learning	Ability to use efficient learning techniques to acquire and apply new knowledge and skills, use training and feedback for self-learning and development.			
19. Self Esteem	Believes in own self-worth; maintains a positive view of self and displays a professional image.			
20. Information Management	Ability to identify a need for and know where or how to gather information; organize and maintain information or information management systems.			
21. Memory	Ability to recall information that has been presented previously.			
22. Arithmetic	Ability to perform computations using whole numbers, fractions, decimals and percentages			
23. Math Reasoning	Ability to solve practical problems by choosing appropriate from a variety of mathematical and statistical techniques.			
24. Promotion Potential	Demonstrates characteristics indicative of potential for higher level positions			

APPENDIX B. SURVEY FORM

FIRST-YEAR INTERNS AFTER CLASSROOM TRAINING

We are asking you to please provide any thoughts and/or comments on your experience in the training session that you have attended for the past few months. We would like to take your comments into consideration for future endeavors of this nature. Please note that this is not an evaluation of your instructors- but of the course in general.

Some questions are set forth below- however please feel free to add any other comments and/or recommendations at the bottom.

Thanks for your input!

1. How did you feel about attending a training session of this type prior to actually reporting to your duty station?

2. Do you think you received a good basic understanding of our Acquisition process and procedures? If not, what would you have liked to have learned?

3. Do you have any apprehension about going to your duty location at this point?

4. Were you satisfied with the way in which the material was provided (i.e. briefing charts, handouts)?

5. What changes, if any would you recommend to us in the future? In what ways can you see the training sessions improved?

These forms are confidential and are used as a basis for improvement to our program only. They are non-attribution in nature.

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APPENDIX C. SURVEY FORM

FIRST-YEAR INTERNS AFTER CLASSROOM TRAINING AND FOUR-MONTH COACHING PROGRAM

Now that you have completed your two-month training with the CECOM Acquisition Center (CAC) Intern Institute and have been part of the Acquisition Center workforce for the last four months, you have had an opportunity to put "classroom learning" to practical use. Now we would like you to think back on your two-month training with the CAC Intern Institute and provide us with an updated assessment. In addition, you are the first group of interns to have the use of the Coaching Program. Your feedback is very important to us so that we can continue to improve and add value to our intern training.

Please respond to the questions below and provide your feedback along with what you think was good about the training, what was not so good and especially how we can improve the training so that it can be even more effective and of value to future interns and our Organization.

Questions are set forth below – however please feel free to add any other comments and/or recommendations at the end.

As always, thank you for your input!

1. Now that you have been a part of the Acquisition Center for four months and are actively working as a Contract Specialist, how do you think the training you received with the CAC Intern Institute helped prepare you for your current job assignment with the Acquisition Center? Please explain how the training did or did not help you.

2. Do you think that the CAC Intern Institute training should continue to be given prior to starting on-the-job training, do you think it would be better to be given the training after you have had the opportunity to work for a few months in the Acquisition Center, or do you think there was insufficient value added by this training to merit the time spent? Please explain your answer.

3. Do you think that the training you received gave you a good basic understanding of our acquisition processes and procedures and that it is helping you in your current assignment? Please provide any positive and/or negative comments along with recommendations for improving our curriculum.

4. Considering your current experiences and looking back on the training, what could we do differently for future training? Were you satisfied with the way in which the material was provided (i.e., briefing charts, handouts, the subject matter expert briefings, classroom exercises, interactive training, etc.)?

5. Do you think there should be more interactive training? If so, please provide examples of the type of interactive training you would find beneficial and explain how it could be accomplished.

6. Now that you've had some practical experiences, what part of the AC Intern Institute training helped you the most and was the most beneficial to you? What should we ensure we continue?

7. Are there any blocks of instruction that you think should be removed from the AC Intern Institute training curriculum? If so, please list them and comment on whether you think they were of no value or whether they were given too early in your contracting career to be of any future value.

8. Is there any specific training that should be added to the AC Intern Institute curriculum?

9. During the training, you had the opportunity to come to the Acquisition Center and shadow a senior intern for half of the work day and share/participate in some actual work experiences. Please provide your comments/feedback on this experience. Was it a benefit to help you ease the transition from the training class to the workforce? Did it help relieve any fears of the work place? Should future classes consider including more of this training opportunity and increase such visits?

10. What improvements can we make for future training classes that would be of immediate help in starting work?

11. Please provide your comments on the Coaching Program. Has it helped to supplement your learning? Is it beneficial to you? If you haven't utilized the Coaches, please explain why.

12. Please provide any additional comments and/or recommendations for improvement of the CAC Intern Institute training. Should we continue the CAC Intern Institute in the future?

13. Please provide any additional comments and/or recommendations for improvement of the Coaching Program. Should we continue utilizing the Coaching Program in the future?

14. Please identify your current Sector and describe your current experience within that Sector. For example, are you receiving varied, well-rounded work experiences and is the environment in your Sector conducive to enhancing your learning experiences.

These forms are confidential and are used as a basis for improvement to our program only. They are non-attribution in nature.

ATTACHMENT D. SURVEY FORM

SECOND-YEAR INTERNS AFTER CLASSROOM TRAINING AND ON-THE-JOB TRAINING

Now that you are into your second year as a CECOM Acquisition Center (CAC) Intern, we would like you to reflect back to your days in the CAC Intern Institute and provide us with some feedback. Questions are set forth below however; please feel free to add any other comments and/or recommendations at the end.

As always, thank you for your input!

1. You have been integrated into the CECOM Acquisition Center (CAC) for one year and are an integral part of our workforce. You have had a year of practical experience and we would like you to provide us with an updated assessment of your experiences and whether the CAC Intern Institute helped you put classroom training to practical use.

2. In particular, while attending the CAC Intern Institute you were provided time to take the required on-line CON 101 Training class;

a. How did you feel about taking CON 101 during the CAC Intern Institute training?

b. Did being in class at the same time help you better understand the requirements of CON 101 because of the classroom instruction provided?

c. Was there a positive, negative or neutral impact on either the CAC Intern Institute training or your participation/completion of CON 101?

d. Based on your experience, now that more required classes are on-line, would it help to have more on-line classes coincide with the CAC Intern Institute training or at a minimum CON 101 or, doesn't it matter?

3. Please identify your current Sector and describe your current experience within that Sector. For example, are you receiving varied, well-rounded work experiences and is the environment in your Sector conducive to enhancing your learning experiences.

4. Although the Coaching Program was only implemented this past October, your comments/recommendations in this area are requested as well. Is it beneficial to you as a Second-year intern?

Your feedback is very important to us so that we can continue to improve and add value to our intern training program. Your responses are confidential and are used as a basis for improvement to our program only. They are non-attribution in nature.

APPENDIX E

Intern Pilot Training survey for CE LCMC Contracting Officers

Questions marked with an asterisk (*) are mandatory.

This survey was prepared by Tom Dickson. The intent of the survey is to gain data relating to the pilot program for training iterns which was conducted at CE LCMC and to determine whether or not Contracting Officers are of the opinion the pilot program provided significant benefits over training interns individually

1 * As a contracting officer, I have noticed a measurable difference in the ability of interns who participated in the pilot program, over those who did not receive coaching and classroom experience

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Sure
1	2	3	4	5

2 Interns benefit most from "traditional training" which relies on an individual (one-on-one) trainer

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Sure
1	2	3	4	5

3 The Pilot Training program, which employed a coaching technique, provided the interns with a broader, more complete experience that will provide benefits over one on one training

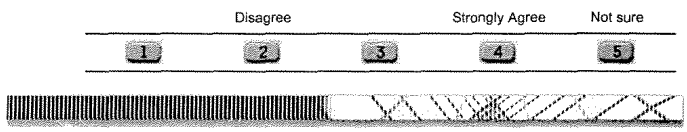
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Sure
1	2	3	4	5

4 On-the-job training is more beneficial for an intern's career development than on-line training

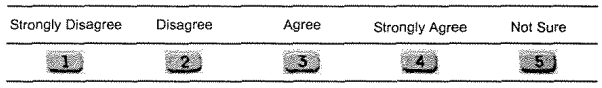
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Sure
1	2	3	4	5

5 *In my opinion, interns received the same level of training if they participated in the pilot program or if they were trained on an individual basis

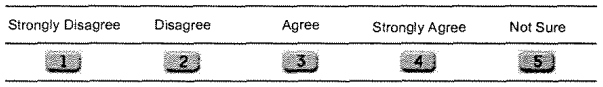
Strongly Disagree	Agree



6 Classroom training is superior to online training

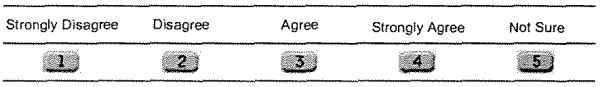


7 The pilot program initiated by the Acquisition Center assisted interns in developing critical thinking skills.



8 The interns who participated in the pilot program had a clear advantage in working independently over interns in previous training methods that used one-on-one training

9 I noticed fewer mistakes in reviewing the work completed by interns who had participated in the pilot program over interns who were trained in tradtional one-on-one training



10 *I believe the pilot program was a cost-effective method of training new employees and think it should be adopted by other Acquisition Centers

11 Please provide any suggestions you have to improve on the job training for interns

12 What new or developing challenges do you think will be placed on interns as they progress through their career?

13 What types of skills and abilities will be these challenges require?

14 In my opinion, the interns that progressed through the pilot program had a better fundamental understanding of the basic contracting knowledge relating to the following: Check any or all that may apply

- Cost-type traditional "C" type contracts
- ID/IQ type contracts "D" type contracts
- Commercial Acquisitions
- Simplified Acquisitions
- Market Research
- Contract Administration
- Other, please specify

15 I have been a Contracting Officer for _____ number of years (Please write in number of years in the blank below)

Thank you for your feedback.

SUBMIT

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APPENDIX F

Pilot Intern Training at CE-LCMC - Managers

1 Interns attending the CE-LCMC Pilot training program are more prepared to begin working than prior interns who did not attend this type of training.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

2 The Pilot Training Program at CE-LCMC was a wise use of the Acquisition Center's resources.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

3 The type of training that an Intern has received has made no difference in their performance on the job.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

4 CE-LCMC Pilot Training Program provided Interns with the skills necessary to perform basic contracting.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

5 CE-LCMC Pilot training provided the Interns with better contracting skills than the traditional one-on-one training.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

6 The CE-LCMC Pilot Training program promoted teamwork in the organization better than the traditional one-on-one training.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

7 The interns who participated in the CE-LCMC Pilot Training Program had a clear advantage in working independently over previous interns who received the traditional one-on-one training.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

8 I feel that the Interns who completed the Pilot Training Program at CE-LCMC were better prepared to begin their acquisition careers and work on more complicated contractual actions sooner.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

9 The Pilot Intern Training Program at CE-LCMC meets the Strategic Goals of the Organization.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

10 Are there any improvements you would like to see in the training program?

11 What challenges do you feel lie ahead for acquisition professionals in the future?

12 What skills or abilities should the Intern training program focus on to meet these challenges?

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